

I am an independent performing songwriter and musician. I have been a DJ on both listener-supported and local AM radio stations. I have a self-produced full-length album and a single. I cannot get very much airplay because I do not have the thousands of dollars it takes to get my music played and promoted. I am extremely frustrated at the powers that control the air waves with their money, both as an artist and as a consumer. What I hear on most commercial radio stations is evidence to me that there is very little competition--because I hear very little variety or originality.

I have released a dozen songs to the public. I am an unsigned musician, with a strong following. I manage an email list to keep my followers informed and I maintain a website also (www.cornponerevue.com). I sell my songs over the Internet on a number of websites. I perform several times a month at various venues in my region of the U.S., which includes TN, KY, IN, GA. I have also performed in other regions, such as CA and MI. I have opened for 2 Grand Ole Opry Legends. My email list currently consists of about 600 people, half of whom are local and half are in other states or countries. I have had more than a thousand on my list over the last few years, counting all that have been on the list. I have had some airplay on over 200 public stations as far away as Alaska and Finland. My album has been a slow but steady seller, since its release 4 yrs. ago. I have sold about 300 copies of my album on my own without any big money promoting it. Though I am proud of this,

it has not been enough sales to break even on the cost of producing the album. This is a business, and I report my income from it with my IRS 1040 form. I would like to see it continue and become profitable. Airplay on major commercial stations might help that, but is impossible the way things are now.

I have had several experiences with airplay. It has all been public, local, web or college stations. As an individual, I've had very little response altogether from DJ's, not clear why. Here and there has been a DJ or a PD who has made a point of giving me regular airplay. I have had a spin or two from several other DJ's on a niche show or two. The niche shows are overwhelmed with new music from indies like me because they are the only ones who can play them, who are not under the control of the big guys who call the shots with their big bucks. The niche shows have only an hour or two a week to play a tremendous amount of continual new music. I cannot afford to throw away any more CD's trying to get airplay. I have given up on getting airplay on my own. In the Nashville area where I live, the big country "stars" and their promoters take up most of the airwaves.

I think the only way to be democratic and not succumb to the forces of big business is to be completely responsive to the community. I would fear the FCC's definition of "local programming" might be influenced by those big businesses, just like our Congress is.

"Locally originated" or "locally produced" in the Nashville area would naturally include all the already wealthy studios, artists, producers, etc. who live here. So I don't think these definitions would help any indies around here. Yes, it would be nice if all programming decisions were made at the local station level.

All of these things, such as high school bands or ball games, could and should count as local programming. Perhaps "local" should be defined as having been produced within the listening area of a station...or perhaps

within a certain radius of that station, tho of course there would be many that would overlap..

Since there is an abundance of this sort of activity, I think charitable events should be part of the goodwill that any business should engage in.

I have no personal experience with payola, other than what I suspect is the reason I have not had airplay in some cases. I think that NO money from ANYone, I don't care who it is, should change hands in order for a certain song or artist to get played. It has become a shameful business of who has the most money, rather than enriching the lives of all listeners with creative original sounds. A free concert is not payola if no money has changed hands. Yes, there are huge loopholes in the current payola laws, obviously.

This practice of voice-tracking DOES hurt the community and further limits indies like me. It also perpetuates control by the BIG guys with the money, and eliminates competition and opportunity for the little guys.

Thank you for considering my comments. I appreciate the opportunity to participate and I am thankful the FCC is seeking public comment. It gives me a little relief to know there is still a bit of democracy left somewhere in the federal agencies of our government.